

Message

From: Strauss, Linda [Strauss.Linda@epa.gov]
Sent: 9/1/2015 4:58:40 PM
To: Jones, Jim [Jones.Jim@epa.gov]; Wise, Louise [Wise.Louise@epa.gov]; Sterling, Sherry [Sterling.Sherry@epa.gov]; Mojica, Andrea [Mojica.andrea@epa.gov]; Dunton, Cheryl [Dunton.Cheryl@epa.gov]
Subject: just FYI the incoming from the Chicago Tribune Investigative Reporter on 2,4-D in food

Just FYI, here's the incoming from the Chicago Tribune reporter (that called Linda Taylor at home!) OPP is working on a written response.

Cathy,

Thanks for taking my call. As we discussed, my story looks at your agency's decision to allow 41 times more 2,4-D in food and water than the amount allowed by the EPA under the administration of President George W. Bush. You had asked that I put some key points in writing so that you could find the right EPA officials to answer questions and comment on my investigation.

The broader context of my story is how the latest generation of genetically modified crops is resurrecting weed killers of generations past. I am not focusing on the altered DNA in the crops themselves; rather, I am looking on the farm chemicals these crops enable.

EPA's own estimates of dietary exposure show that if Dow's new genetically modified crops are widely adopted, American toddlers, preschoolers and elementary school children could ingest on a regular basis levels of 2,4-D in food and water considered dangerous by EPA scientists for decades - exceeding the allowable levels set under every administration dating back to Ronald Reagan's presidency. Indeed, day to day people of all ages unwittingly could ingest 2,4-D at levels that the Bush administration considered unsafe. Kids between the ages of 1 and 12 could be exposed chronically to levels of 2,4-D the World Health Organization considers unsafe. Not only could young children exceed Canada's chronic allowable level of 2,4-D, but the most exposed toddlers could exceed the level Canada sets for just one day's exposure. The USDA anticipates a nearly seven-fold increase in the amount of 2,4-D sprayed on corn and soybeans if Dow's new genetically modified crops are widely adopted. Had the EPA kept the dietary protections set in 2005, I don't believe the EPA would have been able to clear the increased use of 2,4-D for Dow's new genetically modified corn and soybeans. I would like to interview the EPA officials who made the decision to raise the chronic reference dose from 0.005 mg/kg to 0.21 mg/kg and get a better sense of what went into that decision. My story looks at how those allowable dietary levels are set and what this means for public health since 2,4-D has been linked to a wide array of health problems.

As we discussed, I also am interested in talking to Dr. Linda Taylor about her review of the Dow Extended One Generation Reproduction study and her later revision of that review.

I would also like to speak with the EPA official who wrote the answer to Question 11 in the Enlist Duo FAQs. If that person is unavailable, I would like to speak someone who is familiar with the concepts discussed in Question 11. ("11. Did EPA take into account the 10x safety factor specified under the Food Quality Protection Act to protect children?") Here is a link to the FAQs:

http://www2.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/registration-enlist-duo#10x_factor

As you can see, I'd like to speak with the scientists who have intimate knowledge of these decisions, but I'd also like the broader view of EPA leadership on this key public health issue. For that reason, I am requesting an interview with Administrator Gina McCarthy. In addition to the issues I outlined above, I was hoping she would address the concerns raised by Dr. Philip Landrigan in this recent New England Journal of Medicine editorial:

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1505660?rss=searchAndBrowse&>

As you probably know, Dr. Landrigan chaired the National Academy of Sciences panel on pesticides in the diets of children, and it was that panel's grave warnings that led Congress to pass the Food Quality Protection Act in the mid-1990s. Dr. Landrigan was also one of the first scientists to document the brain damage caused by childhood lead poisoning, work that persuaded the EPA to ban lead from gasoline and paint in the 1970s. Last year, he was so alarmed by the dramatic increase in 2,4-D the EPA was allowing into the American diet that he urged Administrator McCarthy to reverse her decision on Enlist Duo. In this editorial, he argues that the EPA failed to follow the federal pesticide law that his National Academy of Sciences panel inspired. I'd like to give Administrator McCarthy a chance to respond.

I look forward to speaking with you and your EPA colleagues this week. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me in my office at (312)222-3898 or on my cell at (312)752-5505.

Many thanks,
Trish

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